

TERRITORIAL BURR OAK

1836

GOVERNMENT SURVEY

CIRCUMFERENCE

16 INCHES - 1836

132 INCHES - 1962

MARKED BY
WHITEWATER VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT
JUNE 30, 1962

The Territorial Oak and the "Point of Beginning"

Surveyors came to Wisconsin in the early 1800s to survey the territory, divide it into townships, and establish the "Point of Beginning" for the new state. As the land was divided up, surveyors also recorded the trees that stood at the beginning of the survey. These trees are also called "survey trees" or "bearing trees".

The large bur oak tree was surveyed in 1816 when the area was first platted. The old survey on the plat map shows the location of the tree and that the tree served as a City Point mark. It became known as the "Bur Oak" and many places and the survey point that lies the endowment for what is now the City of Whitefish Bay.

When surveyed in 1816, the circumference of the Bur Oak measured 16 inches. At almost 200 years old, the tree is a deciduous tree with a thick trunk and a spreading canopy. The upper branches of the tree remain bare.



Local elementary school students have harvested the acorns and planted them, producing young Bur Oak saplings that are the "children" of the Territorial Oak.

Learn about this site and others by visiting the Whitefish Bay Historical Society's Museum at the Passenger Depot or check out the Gems of Whitefish Bay "The Bur Oak Tree" Episode 4.

For more information on Wisconsin Bearing Trees visit the SCO web page at <https://mapscowisconsin.org/bearingtrees/>



The tree has been adopted as a symbol of the City. It can be found on a variety of artwork and logos including the mural located at Whitefish Bay and Center Streets.